

## **Maria Teresa Abreu, M.D.**

Director  
Inflammatory Bowel Disease Center  
Mount Sinai Medical Center

### ***Research Interests***

As Director of the Inflammatory Bowel Disease Center for the Mount Sinai Medical Center, my principal goal is to bridge the gap between the observations made in the laboratory to the implementation of improved treatment to patients with inflammatory bowel disease. Idiopathic inflammatory bowel disease is characterized by intestinal inflammation in the absence of a specific pathogen (infection). The intestinal lining is continually exposed to a high concentration of bacteria. In spite of the density of these bacteria, the intestinal lining is not inflamed. My laboratory is interested in understanding the mechanism by which the normal intestinal epithelium protects against intestinal damage and inflammation in the presence of normal intestinal bacteria. We believe that inappropriate sensing of healthy, nonpathogenic bacteria contributes to the development of inflammatory bowel disease. We have found that the normal intestinal lining is unable to respond to bacterial products, whereas inflamed epithelium does respond to bacterial products. Mutations in a gene involved with bacterial sensing, NOD2, have been identified in patients with Crohn's disease. By understanding the normal relationship between bacteria and the intestinal lining, we may be able to develop improved therapies for patients with inflammatory bowel disease.

[Back to Membership Directory](#)

Last updated 9/15/04